

## The Mongoose Musings



### 2008 Mid-Atlantic Tournament of Champions – October 4-5, 2008

Racquetball enthusiasts totaling 95 from 11 states flocked to the **Laurel Sport Fit** facility in Laurel, Maryland to take part in the **2008 Mid-Atlantic Tournament of Champions**. Assisted by **Karen Denu** and other dedicated volunteers, the hosts of this WPRO satellite event – **Doreen Fowler** and **Dan Fowler** – handled yet another memorable tournament that garnered high marks of excellence.

#### Women's Singles

The women's pro singles division had 8 participants. **Doreen Fowler** defeated **Karen Morton** in four games 6, (3), 5, 3 to win the championship. In the semifinal round, Fowler and Morton were engaged in tough four-game battles against their respective opponents. Fowler outlasted **Phyllis Morris** 7, (2), 6, 10 and Morton bested **Kimberly Farina** 8, (7), 9, 6.

**Kelani Bailey** used deadly combinations of efficient footwork, powerful backhand, and thunderous forehand to *Kelanize* all her opponents in the Women's A Singles division. The division also had 8 participants. The final duel featured Bailey and **Veronica Nogales**, which Bailey won 13, 11 because Nogales could not keep up with her relentless offensive attacks.

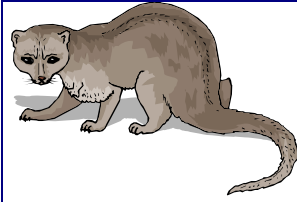
**Dina Alwan** won the Women's B Singles division with 6 participants by defeating **Shelly Derausseau** (10), 2, 3 in the final.

#### Men's Singles

The Men's Open division attracted 14 participants. In the semifinal match, **Dan "The Poet" Fowler** defeated 5-time Maryland state champion, **Jamal Harris**, in two games 0, 2. In the other semifinal match, **Mauricio "The Momentum" Zelada** needed all the skill, energy, and strength he could muster to defeat **John "The Bulldog" Barrett** in a hard fought duel. Known for his tenacity and no-quit attitude, the ageless Bulldog is one of the toughest competitors in the business. He plays every point like there is no tomorrow.

The Fowler versus Zelada match-up in the final was another much anticipated duel between *The Teacher* and *The Pupil*. Yes, knowledge has its place in racquetball. Fowler the Teacher drove this point home when he bested Zelada the Pupil in two games 2, 3 to win the Open division championship.

**Jim Hornsby** has a flair for wearing some of the strangest T-shirts in the racquetball world. The collection of such weird attire reinforces his gruffy "redneck" image. The Mongoose says this affectionately because Hornsby is not your typical suave, ill-mannered, foul-mouthed redneck. His eccentricities do very little to detract from his greatness as a racquetball player.



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Hornsby played in the Men's A Singles division with 17 players. It took Hornsby 3 games to defeat **Roy "The Rabbit" Hare** 8, (10), 4 in the final to win the championship.

With 18 players in Men's B division, **Warren Judge** defeated **Paul Padilla** 10, 7 in the final to earn the divisional crown. **Carlos Hip** bested **David Kopp** 12, 5 to win the Men's C Singles division with 7 players.

Other tournament winners in singles divisions were:

- Men's Singles 50+: **Steven "The Sniper" Simpson**
- Men's Singles 40/45+: **Steven "The Sniper" Simpson**
- Men's Singles 30/35+: **Lee Plaza**

### Doubles

The tournament featured men's, women's, and mixed doubles teams in various skill divisions. The winners were as follows:

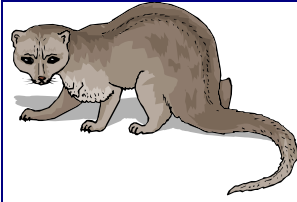
- Men's Open Doubles: **Stephen Lee/Jamal Harris**
- Men's A Doubles: **Lance Warigon/Slemo Warigon**
- Men's C/B Doubles: **Scott Davies/Eric Gregrich**
- Mixed Open Doubles: **Stephen Lee/Khanh Holtslander**
- Mixed B/A Doubles: **Stanley Arnold/Janice Ryan-Arnold**
- Women's Open Doubles: **Phyllis Morris/Malia Bailey**
- Women's B/A Doubles: **Julia Wilson/Regina Bouie**

### Spotlight on Players

**Angela Adams (Odenton, MD):** This elegant red-haired lefty is always a terror in the women's Open doubles and mixed Open's doubles divisions. When she start breaking balls with her powerful forehand, you better get the hell out of her way, or else your body is liable to get some free permanent tattoos from this Smiling Assassin!

**Stanley Arnold (Lanham, MD):** This lefty junior is starting to take racquetball more seriously. He's now playing very well – teaming up with his mom, **Janice Ryan-Arnold**, to regularly dominate the Mixed A Doubles division. All the lessons from **Dan Fowler** are paying handsome dividends in his vastly improved game.

**Kelani Bailey (Norfolk, VA):** She's a ferocious competitor. Her game has a mean streak. She plays every match to dominate and annihilate her opponent, NOT to win *Miss Congeniality* tiara.



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With a very well-established powerful forehand, she worked very hard to improve her backhand and the vast improvement in her backhand showed during her match against **Veronica Nogales** in the final of Women's A Singles. In the racquetball vernacular, to *Kelanize* the opposition is synonymous with the act of dominating one's opponent physically and psychologically.

**Malia Bailey (Norfolk, VA):** She's the ultimate competitor who consistently plays with grace, poise, dogged determination, and fiery will to win. She's also the ultimate teacher. You can learn a lot by simply watching her practice and play in a tournament. Mediocrity and unforced errors are some of the many unwanted items you will not find in this elegant lady's baggage.

**John "The Bulldog" Barrett (Shavertown, PA):** When the Bulldog smells blood, he unflinchingly sinks his teeth into the opponent until the match is finished in his favor. He goes for every ball with determination, and when he fails to make a good get regardless of what his opponent does, he usually mutters to himself: "Move your ass!" With the Bulldog, the game is not over until the fat lady farts!

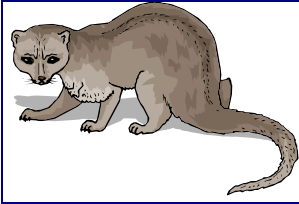
**Cliff Chambers (Brooklyn, NY):** His game is improving exponentially – showing that he's a quick learner. He hung tough against **Mauricio Zelada** in the first round of Men's Open singles. He hits the ball hard on both sides, and moves around the court with remarkable quickness. He's benefiting immensely from the continued tutelage of **Tom Keogh**.

**Robert "Buzz" Corsello (Germantown, MD):** Buzz is a constant in local racquetball tournaments. He loves to play. His quiet, unassuming personality has endeared him in the hearts of many racquetball enthusiasts who crossed his path. He's getting up there in age, but is not afraid to play against the young bucks.

**Scott Davies (Rockville, MD):** He's a very talented doubles partner with a deadly forehand and solid sign language skills. He consistently displays exemplary sportsmanship on and off the court. He wouldn't trade his trusty old E-Force Bedlam racquet for all the whiskey in Ireland!

**Dan "The Poet" Fowler (Silver Spring, MD):** Dan is a quintessential racquetball player who is more concerned about executing his game plan rather than how his opponent plays. There are not many players in the world who can match his level of concentration, dedication, discipline, intensity, and commitment to excellence. His accurate passing and angled shots are intended to test every muscles and flaws in the opponent's game. Once he locks his eyes on a live ball during competition, he's poetry in motion – beautiful footwork to go with smooth strokes.

**Anthony Gambone (Silver Spring, MD):** Anthony is a very tough dude with grungy personality. He loves to talk. He loves to play. He loves to have fun. His opponents are wise to



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stay away from his wicked forehand if they expect to do well against this tough dude. Otherwise, he will seriously kick butts and take names!

**Priscilla Gathoni (Montgomery Village, MD):** She's very talented and dedicated to the game of racquetball. She will soon team up with The Mongoose to terrorize opponents in the Mixed A/Open division.

**Carter "The Groundhog" Green (Virginia Beach, VA):** When the Groundhog shows up in your tournament, you will know that the racquetball season is in full bloom. He's a creature of habit. Sometimes, his intensity leads him to play like he has PMS. That's OK. Don't be too scared. He won't turn into a homicidal maniac. Of that, The Mongoose is certain. Deep down, the Groundhog is a teddy bear who couldn't hurt a fly. His presence always enlivens a tournament. He also strings and sells racquetball products at very reasonable prices. He's truly a gentleman's gentleman.

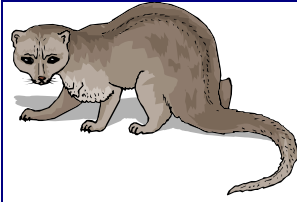
**Roy "The Rabbit" Hare (Alexandria, VA):** The Rabbit covers the court as well as anyone, except perhaps **Jason Mannino, Dan Fowler, and Mauricio Zelada**. He makes his opponents run around with his control game. His weird Mongolian hairdo belies his well-earned reputation as a calculating tactician of the first order.

**Jamal "The Iceman" Harris (Baltimore, MD):** He's still one of the best ambassadors of racquetball. He consistently plays with positive attitude regardless of the outcome. When his musical backhand gets going, it's beautiful to behold and painful to experience. The Mongoose is rooting hard for him to return to his former playing glory.

**Steve "The Grumpy" Holloway (Germantown, MD):** He's a fiery competitor who seems to be always in a bad mood on the court. You never know whether he's having fun, or he's nursing some secret desires to murder his opponent on the court with nary a conscience. The Mongoose watched him closely over the years, and had never seen him smile during a match.

**Khanh "The Intimidator" Holtslander (Harrisburg, PA):** She's quite scary when she puts on her game face. She has the game to back up her intimidating look, which is known to make some opponents wet their pants in anxiety-induced fear before their duels against this trigger-happy Intimidator. Off the court, she's one of the sweetest people!

**Warren Judge (Clinton, MD):** He's a classy gentleman with cheerful disposition and solid game. He hates to argue with his opponents, and usually concedes every disputed point to his opponent. He doesn't need to prove his manhood to anyone. He has the skill and temperament to win crucial points in a given match when it really counts.



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**Tom Keogh (New Hyde Park, NY):** His performance during the tournament didn't measure up to his high standards. Apparently, he left his "A" game in NY. The Mongoose expects him to play much better this weekend during the **Long Island Open Championship**. His compact swing is still a thing of beauty.

**Abbey Lavelly (Cuyahoga Falls, OH):** She's a very graceful player. She teamed up with **Kelani Bailey** to finish 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Women's A/B Doubles division. After defeating **Sharlene Donovan** in the opening round of Women's A Singles, she had a heart-wrenching loss to **Veronica Nogales** in the semifinal round. When she got emotional over the loss, one couldn't help but feel deeply for her.

**Stephen Lee (Randallstown, MD):** He skipped Men's Open Singles division, but played very well in Men's Open Doubles with **Jamal Harris** and Mixed Open Doubles with **Khanh Holtslander**. His backhand is one of the most feared weapons in the business.

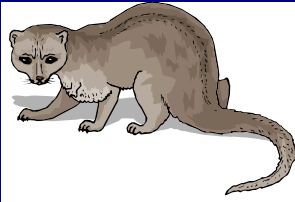
**Karen Morton (Harrisburg, PA):** Karen is one of the most fundamentally sound racquetball players in the world. She still uses her trusty old E-Force Bedlam Knife racquet (2005 version) to win crucial games. She makes unforced errors about as often as **Clif Swain** takes a break from his blistering line drive serves during an IRT competition!

**Daniel Nedd (Laurel, MD):** He's neither the fastest nor the dumbest racquetball player in the world. He has seen all the tricks in the book and doggedly refuses to be fooled. Armed with solid backhand and forehand, he's a force to be reckoned with in men's open and all age divisions. **Stephen Lee** and **Jamal Harris** paid him the ultimate respect by not serving to him during their match in the semifinal of men's Open doubles.

**Lee Plaza (Arlington, VA):** He looks like a very talented squash player. His footwork, control game, court vision, enduring stamina, and optimism are quite admirable.

**Steven "The Sniper" Simpson (Severn, MD): Erik Blood** can't play without beers. The Sniper can't shoot straight without his Cokes. Once he gets Coke in his blood stream, he's as happy on the racquetball court as a kid in a candy store. Blessed with one of the fastest wrists in the world, no one pulls the trigger as quick as this Sniper! He consistently plays like a wounded dog with nothing to lose. Which is why he's one of the most dangerous players around.

**Lance "The Thunder" Warigon (Elkridge, MD):** He teamed up with his old man to win Men's A Doubles championship without losing a single game. He has the game to compete very well in the men's Open division, but lacks the discipline and stamina to sustain his



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competitiveness. The golf season is now over. Last week, he led his high school golf team to the best record in school's history. It's time to go back to the drawing board and work diligently with his favorite racquetball instructor, **Dan Fowler**, to kick the game up another notch.

**Troy “The Wizard” Warigon (Elkridge, MD):** This 12-year old kid took **Steven Finette** to the distance in the quarterfinal of men's A singles before losing (11), 14, 0. The loss took a lot out of him emotionally, and he was not the same player afterward. He'll work with **Dan Fowler** and rebound in no time. His backhand has been firing missiles at the home club after the tournament, and he looks to redeem himself at the **Long Island Open Championship** in NY this weekend.

**Chris Wilmoth (Millersville, MD):** He's a very cocky player with versatile backhand capable of wrecking untold havoc on the court against any opponent in men's Open division. His powerful forehand helps round up a deadly package. He seems to play better when his motor mouth starts running at full throttle. He engages in trash talking just for fun – not to demean or denigrate his opponents. He comes from the school of hard knocks, and absolutely hates wimps. For him, racquetball is not a sport for cry babies!

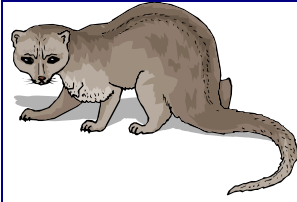
**Ryan “The Wolf” Wilson (Parkville, MD):** It was good to see the Wolf back in action after an extended hiatus from racquetball tournaments. He made it to the semifinal of men's A singles before losing 11, (11), 10 to Roy Hare. The Wolf reintroduced himself to the world as a no-quit battler in that semifinal duel.

**Mauricio “The Momentum” Zelada (Columbia, MD):** He's gradually working himself into a good playing shape. He's taking one year off from college to work diligently on his racquetball game and prepare for a long career in the IRT. When he's ready, the IRT players better watch out for this very talented kid! He can hit, dive, and mix it up with the best of them!!

### The Tournament Ratings

The table below reflects The Mongoose's ratings for the just concluded tournament.

Category	Grade
Cost/Price	A+
Facility	A+
Participation	A
Courts/Matches Scheduling	A+
Foods	A
Players' Performance	A
Disputes Resolution	A+
Overall Atmosphere	A+



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### Future Tournaments

Two future racquetball tournaments on schedule are as follows:

- **2008 Long Island Championships** racquetball tournament scheduled for **October 10-12, 2008** at the Amritraj Fitness and Health Club in Long Island/New York. For details, please check out this site: <http://www.queensracquetsports.com/>.
- **2008 Delaware Ken Laramore Memorial** racquetball tournament hosted by Delaware Amateur Racquetball Association (DARA) on October 11, 2008 Deadline for registration is this Monday. Check <http://www.r2sports.com/tourney/home.asp?TID=4576> for details.
- **The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Ghostly Classic** racquetball tournament to be held in Crystal City, VA on October 16-19, 2008. Monday, October 13<sup>th</sup> is the deadline to register for this can't-miss event under the dynamic leadership of Karen Denu. For details, please visit <http://www.novaracquetball.com/Entry.htm>.
- **13<sup>th</sup> US Open Racquetball Tournament** to be held at the Racquet Club of Memphis, TN on October 22-26, 2008. For details, please check <http://www.usopenracquetball.com/>.

### A Parting Thought

**Dan Fowler** is a keen observer. He noted that **Philippe Jean-Baptiste** outscored **Steven Simpson** 37-26 during a tournament match, but lost the match! This keen observation is pregnant with valuable lessons for all of us. In a nutshell, *quality* will always triumph over *quantity* in any field of endeavor.

Racquetbally yours,

*Slemo*

**Slemo Warigon**, MBA, CIA, CISA, CICA  
The Mongoose Domain

*Racquetball – your sport for life!*